
Education Committee

HB 2037

Brief Description: Regarding academic achievement for immigrant students.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Santos, Kenney, Hudgins, B. Sullivan, McCoy, Roberts and Hasegawa.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creates a pilot program for recent immigrant students who are seniors and need additional English language and academic instruction to meet high school graduation requirements.Creates a joint select committee to develop strategies and recommendations that improve educational opportunities for recent immigrant students with limited English proficiency.

Hearing Date: 2/21/05

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Beginning with the class of 2008, most public high school students, including recent immigrants, must pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to graduate. During the 2003-04 school year, about 17 percent of the immigrant high school students with limited English skills who took the WASL met the state standards in reading and writing and about 10 percent met them in mathematics.

The legislation that included the WASL graduation requirement, 3ESHB 2195, also directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to design a program for recent immigrant students who are old enough to graduate but lack the English language skills necessary to pass the WASL. The two agencies proposed a two phase pilot program for immigrant students who are seniors. Immigrant students in the pilot would be given intensive English language and college preparation instruction. They would also be given an opportunity to take college courses. Funding for students in the pilots would be based on the funding model for the Running Start Program. The proposal was provided to the legislative education committees in September, 2004.

Summary of Bill:

Forward Start Pilot Program

The Forward Start Pilot Program is established. The program's purpose: to provide, in an age-appropriate setting, an integrated program of academic and English language skills for students who have met all state and district graduation requirements with the exception of the Certificate of Academic Achievement and are eligible for the state's transitional bilingual program. The students will have an opportunity both to receive intensive English language and college preparation instruction and to take community or technical college courses.

The program will be designed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in two phases. Phase one will occur during the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years. Up to 50 high school seniors who are in the transitional bilingual program will be permitted to participate. Students in phase one who achieve the proficient level in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and have all the credits they need for graduation will receive a \$1000 scholarship to attend a community or technical college.

Phase two of the pilot will occur during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. Participation in phase two is limited to transitional bilingual students who have met all state and local graduation requirements with the exception of the Certificate of Academic Achievement. Up to 250 students in the first year, and 400 students in the second year will be allowed to participate in phase two of the pilots.

Each student in the pilot will have an individual learning plan developed jointly by the high school and partner college. Students in phase one may participate in the program for two years or until the students graduate from high school. Students in phase two may participate in the program for two years or until the students reach the proficient level in reading, writing, and mathematics on the WASL, whichever comes first. Students may, at no cost, take the WASL twice a year in any content area in which the students were previously unsuccessful. Funding for the program will be based on the funding model for the Running Start program.

The program expires on July 1, 2010.

Joint Select Committee on Immigrant Education

The Joint Select Committee on Immigrant Education is created. The committee will have five members, of whom two will be from the Senate, two will be from the House of Representatives, and one who will represent the governor. The legislators will be selected from each major legislative caucus. The members of the committee will be appointed by April 22, 2005.

The committee will develop strategies and recommendation designed to improve educational opportunities and attainment for recent immigrant students for whom English is a second language. In addition, it will address international distance learning and international high school degree programs and strategies to increase the number of teachers who are prepared to teach students for whom English is a second language. The committee will also address strategies to increase the cultural competence of school employees through consultation and involvement of community-based organizations. Finally, it will recommend ways to infuse cultural awareness and understanding into educator and administrator preparation programs.

The committee may form advisory committees. By December 15, 2005, it will report its findings and recommendations to a group that includes the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, members of the legislative fiscal and education committees, and education agencies.

The committee will receive staffing support from legislative staff. Legislators will receive per diem and travel funds.

The committee and its duties expire on April 1, 2006.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.